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ABSTRACT

Defining the media experience as the media and social interaction involved in any person's viewing of television and the consequences of that viewing for oneself and others, this paper examines how phenomenology and psychodrama--methods of experiential learning focusing on the feeling and imagining functions of communication--can be used to teach television consumers about the media experience. The various sections of the paper (1) establish the media experience as a relevant emphasis of communication study suitable for mass communication consumer education, (2) identify and define the media experience in the context of television viewing, (3) describe and define phenomenology and psychodrama as methods of experiential learning applicable for studying the media experience, (4) present the D-E-S-C Scripting approach as a means of self or active investigation for processing the media experience through phenomenological reflection and psychodramatic role playing, and (5) apply the phenomenological and psychodramatic techniques as imagining and feeling communication functions to the instruction of mass communication consumers. (FL)

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Imagining and Feeling:

Experiential Learning in Mass Communication Instruction

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Learning About Mediated-Personal Communication: A Perspective

Agee, Ault, and Emery (1979) define mass communication as "the delivery of news, ideas, and entertainment to thousands or millions of people simultaneously" (p. 3) and emphasize the terrific impact of the mass media on the world. Along with the more traditional criticism that some form of persuasive receiver manipulation occurs via the media, emerges the notion that some form of experiential learning about the media also occurs without receiver awareness or understanding of the media experience (Parcells, 1978, pp. 2-3). Cathcart and Gumpert (1983) note that "the role of the media in personal communication has, by and large, been overlooked" (pp. 167-168). Historically, scholars have neglected the relationship between mass media and inter- and intra- personal communication, except for the experimental study of media psychological and sociological effects. A newly recognized movement is focusing its exploration on mediated personal communication in which personal communication is interrelated with and interdependent upon the mass media. The significance of this new focus lies in experiential learning as a functional approach to mass communication consumer education.

Media and Social Interaction: A New Typology?

Avery and McCain (1982, pp. 31-36) assert that media technology limits receiver senses, allows for limited receiver control, and provides limited knowledge of media sources to the receiver. Thus, a viewer interacting with the television is interacting both with its programming and its technology and may not even be in control of the media experience. Further, the programming tells the story both through the content and the form (Meyrowitz, 1982). The

form or perspective presented via television and adopted by the viewer is greatly determined by the camera angle, lighting, etc.

Since media are capable of transcending time and space (Gumpert & Cathcart, 1982, p. 170), it follows that television content and form, as programming, create new realities for many viewers, while television technology simultaneously controls much viewer-medium interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Results of such interaction appear to be quite real and, often, quite devastating (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan & Jackson-Beeck, 1979). If certain needs are not met, the viewer is likely to seek those needs through interaction with television (Nordlund, 1978, pp. 150-155); therefore, many individuals accept the newly perceived reality from their television world as preferable to the social interaction of personal relationships from their "real" world.

Miller (1982) argues that heavy media consumption is partially responsible for the developmett of

> cognitively simple information processors who are conditioned to think in terms of stimulus generalization rather than stimulus discrimination....I am disturbed by the possibility that the mass media inhibit our ability to relate interpersonally to eachother; that they create sets, expectations, and thinking habits which hinder us in dealing with others in our daily environment as individuals. (pp. 54-55)

Interaction involves the reciprocal action or mutual participation in any given situation or event. Society, the environment, and the individual all influence one another as part of any interaction (Parcells & Cardona, Note 1, p. 2). Both the (1) media interaction between the viewer and the television and, (2) the social interaction between the viewer and others during and/or following the television viewing are inseparable elements of great consequence for the media consumer.

Experiential Learning Through The Imagining and Feeling Functions of Communication

Experiential learning, "learning by doing" (Dewey, 1938; Parcells & Cardona, Note 1, pp. 7-11), is defined in the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors (1982) as including "knowledge and skills acquired outside of book/lecture learning situations through work, play, and other life experiences" (p. 88). The Speech Communication Association's National Project on Speech Communication Competencies emphasizes experience as an essential element in learning communication competence through the accomplishment of five functions, i.e., controlling, feeling, informing, ritualizing, and imagining (Allen & Brown, 1976, pp. 252-254). Students must be given an opportunity to make use of their experiences; to process their experiences. von Eckartsberg (1971a, 1971b) describes an experiential learning method where human experience is brought to consciousness through reflection. Parcells and Cardona (Note 1, pp. 8-11) place experiential learning into the domain of communication education with the learner's task the integration of knowledge and development of evaluative skills through human experience. This orientation of experiential learning is most appropriate for the feeling and imagining communication functions (Allen & Brown, 1976, pp. 251-252). Feeling functions are acts in which an individual's main purpose is to express feelings and attitudes through an emotional response, while imagining functions are acts placing an individual into imaginary situations. Experience plays a significant role in both of these communication functions. Moreno's psychodrama (1953) and Lanigan's phenomenology (1979) are methods of experiential learning appropriate for the instruction of mass communication consumers with a focus on the feeling and imagining functions of communication.

Experiential Learning and The Media Experience: The Problem and Purpose

The media experience is the media interaction and social interaction involved in any person's viewing of television and the consequences of that television viewing for oneself and others. The problem appears to be quite basic: How can television viewers--consumers--learn about relationships between themselves, others, and television through phenomenological reflection on and psychodramatic role playing of the media experience or its extensions? However, the learning experience posits the consumer into the domain of holistic education, where relating to one person or technology automatically implies an interconnection with other relationships (Parcells & Cardona, Note 1, pp. 7-9). It adds to the study of self-television and self-other-television related interactions, the study of many interconnected relationships, i.e., other-other and other-television. The problem may be restated in the following question: How can the feeling and imagining functions of communication be used to teach television consumers about the media experience through experiential learning--phenomenology and psychodrama?

This paper will explore two approaches for instructing television viewers how to reflect and process the media experience. However, psychodramatic role playing and phenomenological reflection as feeling and imagining forms of experiential learning may be applied to any medium as approaches to mass communication consumer education. The purposes of this paper are to: (1) establish the media experience as a relevant emphasis of communication study suitable for mass communication consumer education; (2) identify and define the media experience in the context of television viewing; (3) describe and define phenomenology and psychodrama as methods of experiential learning

applicable for studying the media experience; (4) present the D-E-S-C Scripting approach as a means of self and/or active investigation for processing the media experience through pehnomenological reflection or psychodramatic role playing; and, (5) apply these phenomenological and psychodramatic techniques as imagining and feeling communication functions to the instruction of mass communication consumers.

Defining and Describing Phenomenological Inquiry

The area of research primarily involved in qualitative evaluation may loosely be characterized as a paradigm of naturalistic inquiry, which contains different approaches to the same broadly-defined type of research, i.e., historiography, semiotics, phenomenal and phenomenological study, ethnomethodology, etc. (Guba, 1981; Parcells, Notes 2 & 3). This, then, is the domain from which phenomenological inquiry emerges. Colaizzi (1973, p. 6) defines phenomenology as a descriptive investigation of the dialectical relationship between the intentionalities of experience and behavior, while Patton (1980) Postulates phenomenology as seeking to understand human behavior by examining "how the world is experienced from the actor's own frame of reference" (p. 45). Lanigan (1979, p. 6) presents phenomenology as an investigative method concerned with explaining experience or making conscious, experience.

Phenomenological investigation is a descriptive and empirical method of research that recognizes the value of the investigator's reflection (Colaizzi, 1973, pp. 25-26). Reflection is the recollection and recall to consciousness of an event, while pre-reflection is awareness of the event at a level of immediate experience (Parcells, Note 3, p. 6). Patton (1980, p. 127) notes that it is through reflection that an investigator may move close to the data as a participant. Implicit in such a movement is the notion that the researcher

becomes personally involved in consciousness of the experience and that some type of reflection must be involved in the process of phenomenological explication. Lanigan (1979, pp. 7-10) outlines the phenomenological process as containing three steps: (1) description or "bracketing" the conscious experience; (2) reduction to definition or reducing the essential parts of the description to a definition, "free imiginative variation;" and, (3) interpretation where the meaning of the definition is specified.

Description. The researcher enters the world as co-constituted, since no split of the subject and object is possible (Colaizzi, 1973, pp. 20-24). Reality is co-constitution of intentionality of beings in the world as everything in a being's consciousness is intentional or it would not be there (Parcells, Note 3, p. 6). Reality, then, is only discernable as a whole where internal and external realities are combined through consciousness of experience involving the subject and object together. See Figure 1 on p. 7.

Reflection is essential, but can be achieved only after bracketing the event to permit the researcher to step out and study the experience as a whole; transcendence as a means of the researcher moving beyond him or herself. The researcher's reflection, as a detached subject still attached as part of the co-constitution of the subject-object in-situation experience, provides the opportunity to step out and look after bracketing out the essential elements of the experience in consciousness and moving toward the essence of the experience.

Definition. Movement toward the essence of the experience in consciousness by the researcher occurs only through reflection and only after bracketing out the experience through imaginative free variation (Schmitt, 1967, pp. 140-144). The essence includes the essential parts of the conscious experience. Defining

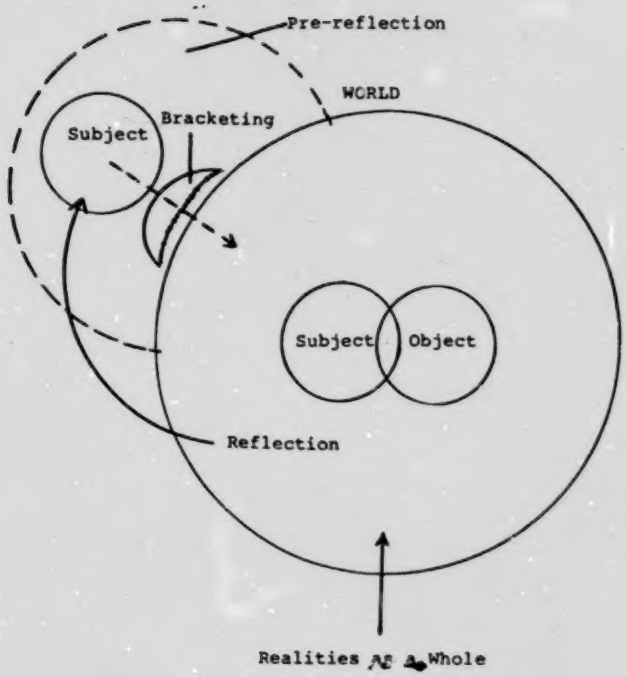

Figure 1. Phenomenology with subject and object together in a co-constituted world.

the essence of the experience or reducing important elements of the experience to a definition is possible by taking other situations and looking for consistencies in structure as basic in other individuals or things in the lived world--imaginative free variation (Parcells, Note 3, p. 6).

Interpretation. Reflection on the essence of the experience allows the researcher to place the experience into subjective perspective and to clarify the event through the specification of meaning. Lanigan (1979) says the purpose of interpretation is "to specify 'meaning' that is essential in the reduction and description of the conscious experience being investigated" (p. 7). Phenomenology, based on a notion of transcendence, is concerned with a qualitative statement of description of experience and structure: necessary and sufficient, representative as a universal, and as valid using just one

subject as it is when using any larger number of subjects. The interpretation stage moves toward higher order abstractions and specifies consequences at various levels of abstraction (Korzybski, 1958). These levels may reach such higher order abstractions that they surface as ultimate social and cultural value issues.

Defining and Describing Psychodrama

Moreno (1953) defines psychodrama as "the science which explores the 'truth' by dramatic methods dealing with interpersonal relations and private worlds" (p. 531). Psychodrama is action-oriented and individual-centered, but involves group participation through role playing and processing of an in-situation event. Hale (Note 4) defines processing as "the dialogue which takes place in a group or between group members, evaluating how a specific director ...and group has applied the psychodramatic method in a specific session" (p. 1). While the primary focus of psychodrama is therapeutic, the advantages of its application to classroom education are obvious. It actively and emotively involves participants in experiential learning through the processing and reorienting of interaction (Haas, 1949, pp. ix-xii). Moreno (1953, p. 536) acknowledges that psychodrama can be adapted to every type of problem, personal or group, at any age level.

Creativity and Spontaneity in Psychodrama. Psychodrama is based on certain fundamental notions from Moreno's (1953, pp. 39-48) theory of creativity and spontaneity. These notions include: (1) spontaneity arises out of creativity; (2) creativity is receptive to spontaneity and vice versa; (3) spontaneity and creativity interact in a moment of warming up; (4) spontaneity functions only in its moment of emergence as a catalyzer for more creativity; (5) heightened creativity follows a moment of spontaneity; and, (6) a creative

act may be culturally conserved as an end-product or may be reused to encourage heightened creativity. Spontaneity operates in the present and anxiety is among its functions. Psychodramatic role playing, then, involves creativity, a warming up period from which emerges a moment of spontaneity, followed by heightened creativity, and the conservation of a creative act as an end-product or for more creativity. See Figure 2 below.

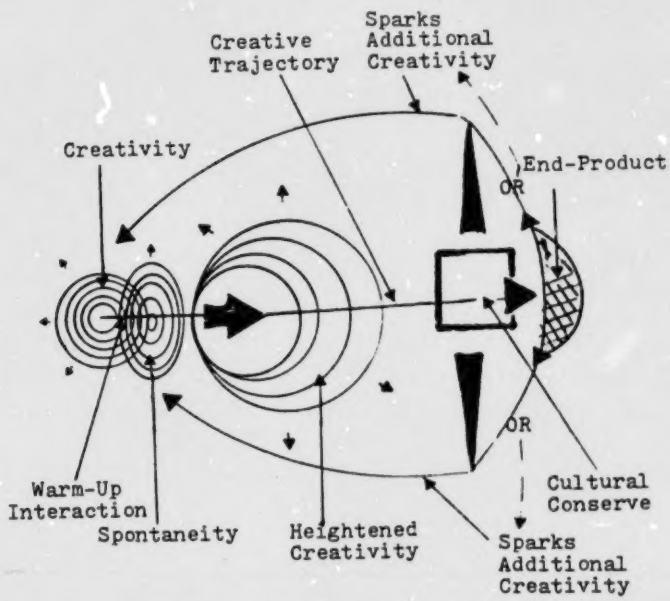

Figure 2. Creativity and spontaneity in psychodramatic role playing.

Ingredients of Psychodrama. The psychodrama requires a "stage," i.e., a non-restrictive area allowing for maximum freedom and flexibility while creating confidence for the participants. Participants include a director, actors--one of the actors is the subject, a staff of auxiliary egos, and the audience. The subject actor is the individual around whom the in-situation drama unfolds, utilizing his or her script as the basis for the role playing.

The other actors are cast in roles of the unfolding drama and respond willingly to the director in support of the subject. The director, producer and counselor, is likely a student who understands that his or her role in the psychodrama includes warming-up the participants, setting the stage, keeping the drama going, and assuming leadership of the psychodramatic processing (Murray, 1949, pp. 135-136). Alter egos provide additional support to the subject and function as extensions of the director with guidance or as extensions of the actors portraying actual or imagined aspects of the unfolding reality in the drama. The audience supports the actors on stage and becomes the "sounding board" for the psychodramatic processing that follows the role playing situation.

Dynamics of Psychodrama. The dynamics of Moreno's psychodrama (1953, pp. 531-537) involve two phases: (1) the production of the drama; and, (2) the processing of the drama.

First, the production, begins with the director helping the participants to warm-up. The director then produces the drama being certain that the subject's point-of-view is trasnferred to the actors and that the alter egos add important dimensions to the unfolding drama by presenting perceptions of the characters. Psychodrama provides the actors with a new and extensive experience of reality as both the subject and other actors, first acutely aware of the audience, quickly become oblivious to its existence. It is important that the audience always be supportive of the participants. The increasing involvement of participant interaction gradually allows the director to withdraw from outright guidance of the unfolding drama and to become a detached observer. At a natural point of conclusion, the drama ends and is ready for processing.

Second, the processing, whereby the drama is investigated through analysis

and evaluation by the participants and the audience under the guidance of the director. The psychodrama is shared experience in which both the participants and the audience have a mutual investment. Everyone gains something from the processing of the in-situation event and this is a point for heightened audience-participant interaction. Hale (Note 4, pp. 2-3) outlines the processing of a psychodrama session stressing the importance of the director's role in moderating the group as a facilitator. Not only must all participants have an opportunity to take part in the discussion of their experience, but additional role playing of unfinished aspects from the production or the application of various principles may be introduced to aid in the processing. This is a period of sharing, discovering, inquiring, and growing.

D-E-S-C Scripting: Self and Active Investigatory Tool for the Reflection On and Analysis Of the Media Experience

Phenomenology and psychodrama are easily applied to the media experience through the use of the D-E-S-C Scripting approach. This approach permits mass communication consumer students to reflect--recall and recollect--and act out their experience of viewing television by: (1) identifying the essence or essential elements of their television viewing experience; (2) applying communication principles to the analysis of their television viewing experience; and, (3) specifying the meaning of their television viewing experience as consequences for future media and social interaction. Clearly, this approach embodies Lanigan's three-step process of phenomenology (1979, pp. 6-8) and Moreno's psychodramatic phases (1953, pp. 531-532).

Parcells (Note 5) has altered the D-E-S-C Scripting approach by Bower and Bower (1976, pp. 87-142) to better meet the needs of this particular instructional methodology. The original DESC Scripting approach was a method

of analysis to recall and rewrite recurring "bad scenes" and negotiate conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships as part of a self-assertiveness training program. Parcells' application of the D-E-S-C approach is based on the assumption that mass communication consumer students have received instruction in the basic principles of phenomenology and psychodrama, i.e., how to reflect on the media experience in such a way as to yield an adequate description of the event from which the essence of the experience can emerge as a definition and be placed into perspective as its meaning is specified through interpertation, role playing, and processing of the in-situation event.

The D-E-S-C approach represents a four-phase effort to record and analyze the media experience: (1) Describe what happened, including the plot, characters (the TV set and/or others), date, time, setting, mood, atmosphere, and message (television programming and/or the peak conversation words uttered by the viewer and/or other viewers during the television viewing experience with nonverbals noted in parentheses); (2) Express the communication principles which will be applied to the analysis of the television viewing experience; (3) Specify the essence of the television viewing experience by reducing its most important elements to a concise definition; and, (4) stipulate the Consequences of the television viewing experience for future media and social interaction by interpreting the meaning of the media experience through analysis using the communication principles expressed in step number 2. See Table 1 on p. 13.

The D-E-S-C approach to scripting may appear to be quite complex, although upon later application it is really quite simple; therefore, an example of its use for phenomenological inquiry of the media experience is

appropriate. Note the details included in the Describe phase and the application of the communication principles in the interpretation of the narrative in the Consequence phase.

Table 1

Juxtaposition of the D-E-S-C Approach with the Phenomenological Method

Phase of D-E-S-C	D-E-S-C Phase Definition	Phenomenologically-Equivalent Step
Describe	Narrative of what actually happened in the media experience.	Description
Express	State the communication principles to be used in the analysis of the media experience.	Definition
Specify	Defining the media experience by reducing essential themes to a concise definition.	Reduction to Definition
Consequences	Stipulating the meaning of the media experience for future media and social interaction through the application of the communication principles identified previously.	Interpretation

Describe. It was a very warm and humid Tuesday evening, July 15, at 7:30 p.m. Jill and I sat in our small livingroom watching Magnum, P.I.--a re-run. We had only a dim light on in the room, and Jill was leaning against my legs. She sat on the floor and leaned against me as I sat on the couch. We were both tired and irritable, since she had been attending college classes

all day and I had worked an eight hour shift at the Trailmobile Plant. I was short-tempered and had just lectured Jill on her responsibilities as my wife. I felt certain that she was irritated by my criticism, which I knew was unfair. I just didn't want to tell her that I was sorry! Magnum was shot and rolled down a cliff!!!

Jill: (jumping up from her position) "Jerry did you see that!? Maybe they won't run the show next season."

Jerry: (looking away from TV toward Jill) "Boy, I bet that hurts!"

Jill: "What hurt, Jerry? It's just a stunt (looking at Jerry as if he was stupid)."

Jerry: "I know that, but it makes you think and feel what it could be like (a slight grin). Hey, he's O.K. afterall."

Jill: "Yea. I didn't think they were ready to kill off Magnum yet!"

Jerry: "Say Jill (looking apologetic but not directly at Jill)...I'm sorry I lit into you earlier. I know college is important to you and..."

Express.

1. Feedback is an essential part of any interaction.
2. Communication is inevitable; irreversible; and, continuous.
3. Communication occurs on more than one level; verbal and nonverbal systems.
4. Relationships are interconnected; by relating to one person or thing, one automatically relates to other person or things.
5. Mass media must be considered as part of all types of communication; public, group, intrapersonal, and interpersonal.

Specify.

1. Interactants are in close physical proximity.
2. Interactants are physically tired and have busy schedules.
3. Interactants enjoy a relatively intimate relationship.
4. Television programming controlled attention of the viewers; over-

powering other thoughts and demanding concentration on television programming.

5. Television programming elicits physical responses from the viewers; jumping up.

6. Empathetic attitude displayed by viewer for actor on the television programming; identification with pain was experienced by the viewer.

7. Interactant quickly brings other interactant back to physical reality of television viewing experience.

8. Greater empathy emerges in one viewer toward the other viewer as a result of the media experience and following media interaction.

Specify: Defining the Media Experience. Physically tired individuals enjoying a relatively intimate relationship with one another lose control of their attention viewing television in close physical proximity of a small, hot room. Television programming overpowers other thoughts and demands concentration, which may be realized through an empathetic attitude toward actors. Television programming elicits physical responses from viewers, such as body movement in sharp reaction or a pain sensation as a reaction to viewing. A return to physical reality is sudden through some type of non-television distraction. Greater empathy in one viewer toward the other viewer is likely the result of media interaction.

Consequences: Interpreting the Media Experience Through Communication Principles. It is impossible to separate the relationships in this experience from one another, as they are interconnected, i.e., viewer to viewer and television to viewer. It is not possible to look at the interaction described in this narrative without considering the medium of television as part of the communication in-situation event. Television affects the dyadic relationship and the dyadic relationship affects the interpretation of television by each individual. While the environment undoubtedly had some effect on the media

experience, it was the television programming (or possibly the television technology) that triggered physical responses from the viewers--both verbal and nonverbal responses. The results of the media and social interaction in this situation are likely to influence, to varying degrees, other relationships that the viewers encounter together or alone in the world. This media experience may be reflected upon and analyzed to provide a better understanding of the interaction, but it may never be repeated again in exactly the same way. The viewer's ability to transact, simultaneously, i.e., feedback, heightened the conclusion of this sequence--an increase in one viewer's empathy for the other.

Beyond The D-E-S-C Approach: Scripting As A Basis for Psychodrama

The Describe portion of the script becomes the starting point for the production portion of the psychodrama. Separate psychodramas may be conducted simultaneously using different scripts and different participants and audiences. However, if more than one drama is presented simultaneously, the stage must be appropriate to accomodate both productions without inter-drama conflict. The subject must feel comfortable with the director, other actors, and the alter egos. The director has a position of particular responsibility and should be a student demonstrating maturity, interest, and availability to prepare for the production and follow-up processing leadership role. The director warms-up the participants and the drama begins to unfold from the event description. A point of caution. The description is only the point of origin or departure for the psychodrama. Since role playing is both creative and spontaneous, the drama's script emerges from the participants' interaction under the guidance of the director through his or her alter egos. The audience is present as observers and nonverbal participants throughout the production. They must

be supportive and empathetic toward the participants. The director may switch roles amongst the participants as the drama proceeds to explore realities of the media experience. The psychodrama not only concerns the media interaction, but also any social interaction related to the television viewing experience. The director may end the role playing as time dictates, but the most acceptable finale to the production is its own natural conclusion, a self-evident dwindling and cessation of interaction.

The processing of the production is initiated by the psychodrama director and actively involves both the participants and the audience. It follows the three-step phenomenological procedure and the four phases of the D-E-S-C Scripting approach. First, each participant must be given an opportunity to describe his or her own dramatic experience, i.e., audience-participant discussion describing the production. Next, the director expresses the communication principles which are to be used to analyze and evaluate the production. Then, through audience-participant discussion, major themes of the drama are specified and the production--the media experience revisited and recreated--is reduced to definition through analysis of themes. Finally, the processing is completed with consequences of the drama for the audience and participants stated as the definition is evaluated based on the communication principles presented earlier in the processing. The meaning of the role playing experience is placed into perspective as the processing concludes the psychodrama.

The psychodrama is as real as the media experience on which it is based and its consequences are significant for the participants and the audience. Effective leadership is imperative, but not an impossible task for a motivated student with the willingness to learn and the dedication to devote the time

so essential for preparation for the drama director. The psychodrama becomes a valuable extension of phenomenological reflection and allows for active investigation of the media experience.

Self-Applied Phenomenology and Group-Processed Psychodrama: Imagining and Feeling Functions of Experiential Learning for Mass Communication Consumers

Phenomenological concern is with "the nature and function of consciousness" (Lanigan, 1979, p. 6), while psychodramatic focus is upon the exploration of interaction through dramatic experience (Moreno, 1953, p. 536). Conscious experience in its self-applied functionality produces an excellent instructional tool with which mass communication consumer students may reflect on the media experience. Dramatic experience is a means of extending phenomenological analysis to different realities by exploring multiple perspectives through a variety of roles. The three-step phenomenological process of describing, defining, and interpreting is an ideal formula for the investigation of one's television viewing or other media experience and is easily adapted to the D-E-S-C Scripting approach. This approach allows on-going reflection and analysis via the application of communication principles to the media experience, and serves as the basis for psychodramatic production and processing. Each student becomes a participant-observer, participating in media and social interaction, while constantly observing themselves in-situation event--the media experience and its extensions.

In the secondary school or college classroom, phenomenology is easily taught as a self-applied method of inquiry; psychodrama leaders may be selected from the student population, trained in the basics, and then direct group productions and processing. Explanations of the phenomenological process and psychodramatic methods do not require an in-depth knowledge and understanding

of philosophical origins, terminology, or methodological theory. Rather, the student task is one of bringing to consciousness the media experience through reflection, reducing its essential elements to a concise definition, specifying its meaning or consequences within the context of certain communication principles, and role playing the media experience form a variety of perspectives as interaction alternatives for future human functioning.

Phenomenology and psychodrama are ideal counterparts in experiential learning, stressing the feeling and imagining functions of communication competence. The result for the media consumer is likely to be increased creativity, enhanced spontaneity, and a new awareness of the mass media and interpersonal relations. Students will become informed, perceptive, and critical television consumers, cognizant of the consequences of their social and media interaction through mass communication education by learning experientially through phenomenological reflection and psychodramatic production-processing of the media experience.

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